REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Applicants initially note that the form PTO-892 provided with the outstanding Office Action listing the Art of Record appears to recite the wrong reference to Wang. The reference applied against the claims is to Wang, U.S. patent 5,796,876. That reference is not listed on the provided form PTO-892, and apparently the improper Wang reference is cited thereon. Applicants request that the proper reference to Wang be cited on a form PTO-892.

The specification and certain claims are amended by the present response to correct minor formalities. The changes made to the specification and claims are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, and thus do not deem to raise any issues of new matter.

Claims 1-68 are pending in this application. Claims 1-24, 27-52, and 55-68 are allowed. Claims 25, 26, 53, and 54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,796,876 to Wang et al. (herein "Wang") in view of U.S. patent 4,599,656 to Bellinghausen.

Initially, applicants gratefully acknowledge the early indication of the allowance of claims 1-24, 27-52 and 55-68.

Addressing now the rejection of claims 25, 26, 53, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Wang in view of Bellinghausen, that rejection is traversed by the present response.

Applicants initially note that each of independent claims 25 and 53 is amended by the pesent response to clarify features recited therein. Specifically, each of those claims now recite that the binarization threshold values of the blocks created by the block division are set "by mulitplying the photometric values smoothed by said photometric value smoothing unit by a predetermined coefficient."

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According to such a feature clarified in indpeendent claims 25 and 53, as a result of multiplication by the predetemrined coefficients, binarziation threshold values that are less affected by noises can be set to provide high quality binary images, without having to use any complex structure such as a mechanism to detect edges.

The above-noted claim features are fully supported by the original specification, for example at page 21, line 14 et seq. As noted in that portion of the present specification, by utilizing the multiplication by a predetermined coefficient no special circuitry is required and the circuit structure can be simplified, and moreover high speed processing at a low level of power consumption becomes possible.[1]

Applicants further respectfully submit that such a feature clearly distinguishes over the applied art to Wang in view of Bellinghausen. More specfically, neither Wang nor Bellinghausen are believed to teach or suggest the above-noted feature of setting binarization threshold value of blocks created by block division "by multiplying the photometric values smoothed by said photometric value smoothing unit by a predetermined coefficient."

In such ways, amended independent claims 25 and 53, and claims 26 and 54 respectively dependent therefrom, are also believed to be allowable.

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[1] See specifically the original specification at page 21, lines 23-25.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the

present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested

this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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